

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3 and 5-35 are currently pending. The claims are numbered in accordance with 37 CFR 1.126 and are numbered as originally submitted. The claim numbering included within this response conforms to numbering as indicated in the last office action. Further, the specification and several of the claims have been amended. The amendments made to the specification and the claims are not connected in any way to any rejection in this application.

Claims 1, 3, 5-27, and 29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Wegner (U.S. Patent No. 6,116,664). Claims 28 and 30-35 were objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim.

On May 10, 2004 a telephone interview was conducted with Gary Estremsky, the Examiner assuming responsibility for prosecution of this case. The subject of the interview was the interpretation of U.S. Patent No. 6,116,644 to Wegner. Specifically, the interpretation of Wegner as it relates to the limitation present in claim 1, 20, 21 and 22 that an abutment 22 is movable along a first path when a control element is in locked condition, and along a second path different than the first path with the control element is in an unlocked condition.

The previous office action asserted that Wegner included an abutment (1.26A) that rotates about the pivot (1.10), was movable along two different paths. Applicant and Examiner agreed that the abutment (1.26A) of Wagner could only move along a single path about the pivot (1.10). It was agreed that because the pivot (1.10) is fixed, the abutment (1.26A) can only move along a single fixed arcuate path. In view of the agreed upon interpretation of Wegner, the rejection cited in the last office action is overcome by the limitations currently included in the claims. Accordingly, Applicant requests withdrawal of the rejection to claims 1, 3, 5-27, and 29.

During the interview, the Examiner raised the question as to whether the Wegner coupling member (2.6) could meet the limitations present in claims 1, 20, 21, and 22. Claim 1 recites the limitation that with the control element in the locked condition, an abutment to moves in a first path, and movement of the release mechanism with the control element in the locked condition causes the abutment to move in a second path differing from the first path.

The Wegner coupling member (2.6) only moves in an unlocked condition. In the locked condition the coupling member (2.6) does not move and is simply left in a position that does not contact any abutments (1.27, 1.26A, 1.26B). The Wegner coupling member (2.6) only is moved in the unlocked condition and therefore does not move in two paths. Accordingly, the Wegner coupling member (2.6) cannot meet the limitations of claim 1. Further, claims 20, 21 and 22 includes similar limitations that require movement of an abutment along first and second paths depending on whether the control element is a locked or unlocked condition.

Claim 20 includes the limitation that the release mechanism includes a release link having an abutment movable along first and second different paths. Further, claim 21 includes the limitation that movement of the abutment along the first path includes an arcuate movement into contact with the release element and a generally linear movement to move the release element to a release position. Claim 22 includes the limitation that movement of the abutment along the first path is different that movement of the abutment along the second path. These limitations are not meet by Wegner. Accordingly, the claims are in allowable form.

Accordingly, Applicant requests favorable consideration of this response. Please contact Applicant's agent at the below listed number if it is felt that a teleconference would aid in forwarding this application to grant. If any additional fees are due, the Commissioner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 50-1482, in the name of Carlson, Gaskey & Olds, P.C., for any additional fees or credit the account for any overpayment.

Respectfully Submitted,

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